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Attorneys for Plaintiff
and Aggrieved Employees

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

LAMONT SOLOMON, as an individual and
on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

APRIA HEALTHCARE LLC, a Delaware
Corporation; and DOES 1 through 100,

Defendants.

Case No. RIC2002553

*[Case assigned for all purposes to the Hon.
Daniel Ottolia, Dept. 04]*

**REQUEST FOR JUDICIAL NOTICE IN
SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF'S MOTION
FOR APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT OF
CLAIMS BROUGHT UNDER THE
PRIVATE ATTORNEYS' GENERAL ACT
AND REASONABLE ATTORNEYS' FEES,
COSTS, AND ENHANCEMENT AWARD**

Date: February 2, 2022

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Dept.: 4

Reservation ID: 541912703976

Complaint Filed: July 9, 2020

Trial Date: None Set

Pursuant to California Evidence Code §§ 452(d) (judicial notice may be taken of records of any court in this state or of any court of record of the United States) and 453 and Rule 3.1306(c) of the California Rules of Court, Plaintiff Lamont Solomon (“Plaintiff”) respectfully requests that this Court take judicial notice of the following Orders entered by state courts, in support of Plaintiff’s Motion for Approval of Settlement of Claims Brought Under the Private Attorneys’ General Act:

1. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** is a true and correct copy of Judge Marc Marmaro’s June 13, 2016 tentative ruling approving a PAGA settlement in *Resendez v. Bridgestone Retail Operations, LLC*, Case No. BC596892, a case brought by Plaintiff’s counsel. Judge Marmaro adopted his tentative ruling and approved the PAGA settlement. In his ruling, Judge Marmaro awarded an enhancement payment to the named plaintiff in the amount of \$10,000.

2. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 2** is a true and correct copy of Judge Teresa Beaudet’s August 22, 2018 ruling approving a PAGA settlement in *Canul v. Basmat, Inc.*, Case No. BC674940, a case brought by Plaintiff’s counsel. In her ruling, Judge Beaudet approved an enhancement payment to the named plaintiff in the amount of \$5,000.

3. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 3** is a true and correct copy of Judge David S. Cunningham III’s November 19, 2018 ruling approving a PAGA settlement in *Gonzalez, et al v. CitiStaff Solutions, Inc.*, Case No. BC620115, a case in which Plaintiff’s counsel was co-lead counsel. In his ruling, Judge Cunningham awarded enhancement payments of \$5,000 each to three named plaintiffs, from a \$275,000 gross settlement amount.

4. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 4** is a true and correct copy of Judge Yolanda Orozco’s September 30, 2020 Judgment approving a PAGA settlement in *Ibarra v. Baker Commodities, Inc.*, Case No. 19STCV06148, a case handled by Plaintiff’s counsel. In her ruling, Judge Orozco approved an enhancement payment to the named plaintiff in the amount of \$5,000.

5. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 5** is a true and correct copy of Judge Ernest Hiroshige’s ruling approving a PAGA settlement in *Pickett v. 99 Cents Only Stores, et al*, Case No. BC473038, downloaded from the Court’s website, in which Judge Hiroshigi approved enhancement payments of \$12,500 each to two named plaintiffs.

6. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 6** is a true and correct copy of Judge Brad Seligman's order approving a PAGA settlement in *Enombang, et al v. Target Corp.*, Alameda County Case No. RG17853948, downloaded from the Alameda County Superior Court's website. In his order, Judge Seligman approved enhancement payments of \$20,000 each to four named plaintiffs.

7. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 7** is a true and correct copy of Judge David Brown's tentative ruling approving a PAGA settlement in *Grace v. Flowmaster Inc.*, Sacramento County Case No. 34-2017-00220347-CU-OE-GDS, which was downloaded from the Sacramento County court website. In his order, Judge Brown awarded an enhancement payment to the named plaintiff in the amount of \$10,000.

Dated: January 6, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

HAINES LAW GROUP, APC

By:

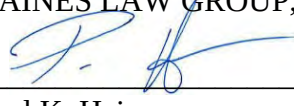

Paul K. Haines
Attorneys for Plaintiff and Aggrieved
Employees

EXHIBIT 1

CASE NAME: Resendez v. Bridgestone Retail Operations, LLC
CASE NO.: BC596892
HEARING DATE: 6/13/16
DEPARTMENT: 37
CALENDAR NO.: 9
TRIAL DATE: 2/14/17
NOTICE: OK
SUBJECT: Motion for Approval of Settlement of Claims Brought Under the Private Attorneys General Act
MOVING PARTY: Plaintiff Sophia P. Resendez, on behalf of herself and all others similarly situated
OPPOSING PARTY: None

FILED
Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles
JUN 13 2016
Sherril A. Carter, Executive Officer/Clerk
By K. Mason Deputy

COURT'S TENTATIVE RULING

The unopposed motion is granted. Counsel for Plaintiff to give notice.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

This is an action for civil penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 (PAGA), which is codified in the Labor Code (Lab. Code, § 2698 et seq.). Defendant Bridgestone Retail Operations, LLC operates a chain of auto care and tire stores and employed Plaintiff Sophia P. Resendez from August 18, 2013 until May 14, 2015. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant failed to include its address on employee wage statements in violation of Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a)(8), and that Defendant paid meal period premiums to non-exempt employees pursuant to Labor Code section 226.7, thereby acknowledging that it had violated Labor Code section 512 regarding the provision of meal periods. Plaintiff filed suit on October 5, 2015, and the parties settled the matter during mediation with the Honorable Ronald M. Sabraw (Ret.) on February 25, 2016.

DISCUSSION

I. General Legal Principles Applicable to PAGA Settlements

A. The PAGA

Plaintiff moves the court to review and approve the civil penalties sought as part of the settlement of her PAGA claims. (Lab. Code, § 2699, subd. (f).) The PAGA is "a procedural statute allowing an aggrieved employee to recover civil penalties—for Labor Code violations—that otherwise would be sought by state labor law enforcement agencies." (*Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 1756, AFL-CIO v. Superior Court* (2009) 46 Cal.4th 993, 1003.) The statute provides a mechanism for private enforcement of Labor Code violations for the public benefit. (See *Arias v. Superior Court* (2009) 46 Cal.4th 969, 986; *Ochoa-Hernandez v. Cjaders Foods, Inc.* (N.D.Cal. 2010) 2010 WL 1340777, at p. *4.) To incentivize employees to bring PAGA actions, the statute

06/15/2016

provides aggrieved employees 25 percent of the recovered civil penalties. (Lab. Code, § 2699, subd. (i).) The remaining 75 percent is distributed to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) "for enforcement of labor laws and education of employers and employees about their rights and responsibilities under [the Labor Code]." (*Ibid.*)

B. Settlement Generally

In reviewing the terms of a settlement agreement, the court determines whether the settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate to all concerned, and not the product of fraud, collusion, or overreaching. (*Reed v. United Teachers Los Angeles* (2012) 208 Cal.App.4th 322, 337; *Nordstrom Commission Cases* (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 576, 581.) In the context of a class action settlement, the court considers various factors including whether (1) the settlement is the result of arm's length bargaining, (2) investigation and discovery are sufficient to allow counsel and the court to act intelligently, (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation, and (4) the percentage of objectors is small. (*Nordstrom*, at p. 581; *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.* (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 245.) In considering the amount of settlement, the court is mindful that compromise is inherent and necessary in the settlement process. (*Wershba*, at p. 250.)¹

II. Application of General Principles

A. Terms of the Settlement

The settlement provides for Defendant to pay a Gross Settlement Amount (GSA) of \$950,000. After deducting one-third of the GSA (\$316,666.66) for attorney fees, attorney costs (\$7,005.82), an enhancement award for Plaintiff (\$10,000), and settlement administration costs (\$30,000), the settlement provides for distribution of a PAGA penalty fund of no less than \$585,833.34, with no less than \$439,375 to be paid to the LWDA, and no less than \$146,458.34 to be paid to the aggrieved employees. The parties have agreed to use CPT Group, Inc. (CPT) as the third-party settlement administrator. In that capacity, CPT will attempt to notify the aggrieved employees based on information provided by Defendant and distribute payments to the

¹ As Plaintiff points out, a PAGA settlement is different from a class action settlement in at least two respects. First, in considering a PAGA settlement, the court considers whether the total settlement amount achieves the PAGA's objective. Civil penalties are not meant to compensate employees but to serve law enforcement purposes by deterring unlawful conduct. Second, because the PAGA does not create property or substantive rights, aggrieved employees represented by the PAGA representative need not be given notice of the PAGA claim and cannot "opt out" of such a claim. Notwithstanding these difference, the general principles applicable to class action settlements apply equally in this context.

employees.² Aggrieved employees will not be required to submit claim forms to participate, will automatically receive the share of the settlement, and will have 180 days to cash their settlement checks. The amount of any checks that are returned as undeliverable or not cashed within 180 days shall be tendered to a fund benefitting Defendant's employees with personal or family emergencies.

B. Analysis of the Civil Penalties

The settlement represents a compromise with respect to the strength of Plaintiff's claims and Defendant's defenses to those claims. For instance, while Plaintiff contends that Defendant violated Labor Code section 226 by failing to include its address on wage statements, she acknowledges that Labor Code section was amended shortly before she filed suit to permit employers to "cure" such a violation by providing compliant wage statements to affected employees. The parties dispute whether Defendant timely cured the defective wage statements. Similarly, while Plaintiff contends that Defendant violated Labor Code section 512, which obligates employers to provide meal periods, Defendant maintains that it provided employees an extra hour of pay as a "meal period premium" pursuant to Labor Code section 226.7. Although Plaintiff disagrees, it is Defendant's position that it should not be penalized twice for the same violation. After considering the parties' respective positions before and during mediation, Plaintiff calculated civil penalties of \$842,511 for the failure to include an address on wage statements and \$178,145 for the failure to provide meal periods. The GSA represents about 93 percent of Plaintiff's projected total recovery of \$1,020,656.

The parties arrived at the settlement amount with the benefit of informal discovery and experienced counsel. For instance, Defendant provided Plaintiff with payroll data and calculations for aggrieved employees, including the number of deficient wage statements and the number of pay periods in which meal period premiums were paid. Plaintiff's counsel is experienced in wage-and-hour class actions, who believes the settlement to be fair and adequate for all involved. In addition, the parties reached their agreement with the benefit of a neutral mediator. These circumstances demonstrate that the agreement represents an arm's length transaction untainted by fraud, collusion, or self-dealing. (See *Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.* (2008) 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 130.) Accordingly, for these reasons, the court determines that the settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable.

C. Attorney Fees and Costs

The PAGA contains a fee-shifting provision providing the prevailing party recovery of attorney fees and costs. (Lab. Code, § 2699, subd. (g).) Here, the one-third fee award is reasonable and consistent with fee awards in class action cases. (See *Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.* (2008) 162 Cal.App.4th 43, 66, fn. 11 ["Empirical studies show

² Plaintiff represents that based on the latest information, there are 3,002 persons who fall into the definition of "aggrieved employees" in this case. The estimated average payment for each aggrieved employee is \$48.23.

that, regardless whether the percentage method or the lodestar method is used, fee awards in class actions average around one-third of the recovery' "). In addition, the GSA exceeds other PAGA awards that have been approved by courts in this state. (E.g., *Aguirre v. DSW, Inc.* (C.D.Cal. 2012) 2012 WL 11875296, at p. *3 [approving \$10,000 PAGA payment]; *Boyd v. Bank of America Corp.* (C.D.Cal. 2014) 2014 WL 6473804, at p. *8 [approving \$18,750 PAGA payment].) The success of the litigation and the experience of counsel in handling similar matters also favors an award of one-third of the recovery.

The reimbursement of costs of \$7,005.82 is also warranted. Plaintiff presents an itemization of costs, which consists of (1) copying, postage, and research costs; (2) mediation fees; (3) filing and jury fees; (4) CourtCall fees; and (5) parking and mileage. (Declaration of Paul K. Haines, Exh. F.) Similarly, Plaintiff demonstrates that the \$30,000 of administrative costs for CPT is reasonable and warranted. CPT is experienced as a settlement administrator (Declaration of Julie Green ¶¶ 4-7), and Plaintiff represents that the bid of \$30,000 was low and discounted. Accordingly, the attorney and administrative costs are approved as well.

D. Enhancement Award

Finally, Plaintiff's enhancement award of \$10,000 is reasonable. The purpose of such an award is to incentive aggrieved employees to undertake the risks associated with serving in a representative capacity. (See *Bell v. Farmers Ins. Exchange* (2004) 115 Cal.App.4th 715, 726 ["service payments" compensate named plaintiff "for their efforts in bringing the action"]; *Ingram v. The Coca-Cola Co.* (N.D.Ga. 2001) 200 F.R.D. 685, 694 ["Courts routinely approve incentive awards to compensate named plaintiffs for the services they provided and the risks they incurred during the course of the class action litigation' "). Here, Plaintiff provided factual information and documentation to Plaintiff's counsel, assisted in identifying potential witnesses, and attended meetings with counsel. She estimates that she has spent at least 15 hours on these activities to help move the case forward. (Declaration of Sophia Resendez ¶ 5.) In addition, Plaintiff has agreed to a broader release of all known and unknown claims, including those that are not wage and hour related, subject to a waiver of Civil Code section 1542. Given Plaintiff's participation in the case and the broader waiver she has agreed to, the enhancement award is reasonable.

In sum, the settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate for those concerned. The unopposed motion is granted.

06/15/2016

EXHIBIT 2

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7 Attorneys for Plaintiff
and Aggrieved Employees
8
9

10 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
11 **FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

12 JOSE CANUL, as an individual and on behalf
13 of all others similarly situated,

14 Plaintiff,

15 vs.
16

17 BASMAT, INC., d/b/a MCSTARLITE, a
California corporation; and DOES 1 through
18 100,

19 Defendants.
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CONFORMED COPY
ORIGINAL FILED
Superior Court of California
Los Angeles

AUG 22 2018

Executive Officer/Clerk
by Sally Fletcher, Deputy

Case No. BC674940

Assigned to Hon. Teresa A. Beaudet, Dept. 50

**[PROPOSED] ORDER AND JUDGMENT
GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S MOTION
FOR SETTLEMENT APPROVAL OF
CLAIMS BROUGHT UNDER THE
PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL
ACT, REASONABLE ATTORNEYS'
FEES, COSTS, AND INCENTIVE
PAYMENT**

Date: August 22, 2018

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Dept.: 50

Reservation ID: 180601319394

Complaint Filed: September 6, 2017

Trial Date: None

1 **TO ALL PARTIES AND THEIR ATTORNEYS OF RECORD:**

2 This matter came on regularly for hearing before this Court on August 22, 2018.

3 Having considered the parties' Settlement Agreement;¹ the documents and evidence presented
4 in support thereof; and recognizing the disputed factual and legal issues involved in this case,
5 the risks of further prosecution, the substantial benefits to be received by the Aggrieved
6 Employees pursuant to the Settlement Agreement; and the fair, reasonable, and adequate nature
7 of the settlement obtained as a result of good faith arm's-length negotiations between the
8 parties, the Court hereby makes a final ruling that the settlement is approved pursuant to
9 California Labor Code section 2699(l). Good cause appearing therefor, the Court hereby
10 GRANTS Plaintiff's Motion for Settlement Approval ("Motion") and ORDERS as follows:

11 1. The "Aggrieved Employees" shall be defined as:

12 All current and former non-exempt employees who worked at least one
13 pay period for Basmat, Inc. d/b/a McStarlite ("McStarlite") in California
 at any time during the PAGA Period

14 2. The "PAGA Period" means the period from June 19, 2016 through the date that this
15 Final Order and Judgment is entered.

16 3. The Court hereby approves the settlement as set forth in the Settlement Agreement as
17 fair, reasonable, and adequate, and directs the parties to effectuate the Settlement according to
18 the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

19 4. The Court orders that within ten (10) business days of this Order, McStarlite shall pay
20 the Gross Settlement Amount of \$460,000.00² to the Settlement Administrator, as provided for
21 in the Settlement Agreement. As soon as practicable, but no later than five (5) business days
22 after this Order, McStarlite shall provide to the Settlement Administrator information
23 maintained by McStarlite in the normal course of its business operations containing the

24
25 ¹ All terms used in this Order shall have the same meaning as that assigned to them in the
26 Settlement Agreement, attached as Exhibit 2 to the Declaration of Paul K. Haines filed
 concurrently with the Motion.

27 ² Pursuant to the Settlement Agreement, the \$460,000.00 Gross Settlement Amount is subject to
28 an "Escalator Clause" should the number of Aggrieved Employees exceed 201. Should the
 Escalator Clause be triggered, McStarlite shall increase the amount of the Gross Settlement
 Amount accordingly pursuant to the Settlement Agreement.

1 Aggrieved Employees' names, last known addresses, last known telephone numbers, start
2 date(s) of employment, end date(s) of employment, total pay periods worked during the PAGA
3 Period, and social security numbers.

4 5. The Court hereby approves, as to form and content, the Explanatory Letter submitted by
5 the parties as Exhibit A to the Settlement Agreement.

6 6. The Court hereby appoints CPT Group, Inc. as Settlement Administrator. CPT Group,
7 Inc. is directed to mail the individual settlement payments and the Explanatory Letter to the
8 Aggrieved Employees within thirty (30) days of the date of this Order, as set forth in the
9 Settlement Agreement.

10 7. The Court finds that attorneys' fees in the amount of one-third of the Gross Settlement
11 Amount (currently estimated at \$153,333.33³) for Plaintiff's counsel, and reimbursement of
12 litigation costs of \$15,716.20 to Plaintiff's counsel, are fair, reasonable, and adequate, and
13 orders that the Settlement Administrator distribute these payments to Plaintiff's Counsel as
14 provided for in the Settlement Agreement.

15 8. The Court orders that the Settlement Administrator shall be paid \$6,250.00 for all of its
16 work done and to be done until the completion of this matter, and finds that sum appropriate.

17 9. The Court finds that an Incentive Payment to Plaintiff Jose Canul in the amount of
18 \$5,000.00 is fair and reasonable in recognition of the unique contributions he has made and the
19 risks he undertook, on behalf of the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California, and
20 orders that the Settlement Administrator distribute this payment to Plaintiff as provided for in
21 the Settlement Agreement.

22 10. The Court finds that the distribution of the Net Settlement Amount to the Labor
23 Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA") and to Aggrieved Employees as provided for in
24 the Settlement Agreement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, and orders that payment be made to
25 the LWDA and Aggrieved Employees in accordance with the terms of the Settlement
26 Agreement.

27 _____
28 ³ If the Gross Settlement Amount increases above \$460,000.00 due to the Escalator Clause, the
amount of attorneys' fees awarded to Plaintiff's counsel shall increase commensurately.

1 11. The court approves the limited scope of the release set forth in the Settlement
2 Agreement. Following entry of this Order and Final Judgment, Plaintiff and Aggrieved
3 Employees will have released all PAGA Released Claims against the Released Parties, as those
4 terms are defined in the Settlement Agreement.

5 12. Upon entry of this Final Order and Judgment, the Court permanently enjoins and
6 forever bars the Plaintiff, Aggrieved Employees' Counsel, or the Aggrieved Employees from
7 instituting or prosecuting any action against the Released Parties which was resolved as part of
8 the Settlement Agreement. Without affecting the finality of this Final Order and Judgment in
9 any way, the Court retains jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the Settlement Agreement.
10 Plaintiff shall file a declaration confirming the final distribution of funds on or before

11 _____
12 **IT IS SO ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED.** (JTB)

13
14 Dated: 8/22, 2018

By: Teresa A. Beaudet
Honorable Teresa A. Beaudet
Judge of the Superior Court

EXHIBIT 3

NOV 19 2018

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Attorneys for Plaintiff Silva and Aggrieved Employees

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

JORGE GONZALEZ, individually and on
behalf of himself and other persons similarly
situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

CITISTAFF SOLUTIONS, INC., a California
corporation; and DOES 1 through 30,
inclusive,

Defendants.

LUIS SILVA, an individual, on behalf of
himself and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

CITISTAFF SOLUTIONS, INC., a California
Corporation, and DOES 1 through 100,

Defendants.

Case No. BC620115 (Lead Case)
Case No. BC622512

*[Assigned for all purposes to the Honorable
David S. Cunningham III, Dept. 37]*

**~~[PROPOSED]~~ ORDER AND JUDGMENT
GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S MOTION
FOR APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT
CLAIMS BROUGHT UNDER THE
PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL
ACT, REASONABLE ATTORNEYS'
FEES, COSTS, ENHANCEMENT
PAYMENT, AND SETTLEMENT
ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES**

Date: September 27, 2018
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept.: 37
Reservation ID: 180409304435

Complaint Filed [Lead Case]: May 10, 2016
FSC: October 22, 2018
Trial Date: October 30, 2018

NOVEMBER 19, 2018

This matter came on regularly for hearing before this Court on ~~September 27, 2018~~ at 8:30 a.m. Having considered the parties' Joint Stipulation of Settlement and Release ("Settlement Agreement" or "Settlement"),¹ the documents and evidence presented in support thereof, and recognizing the disputed factual and legal issues involved in this case, the risks of further prosecution, the substantial benefits to be received by the State of California and the Aggrieved Employees pursuant to the Settlement, the fair, reasonable, and adequate nature of the settlement obtained as a result of good faith arm's-length negotiations between the parties, the Court hereby makes a final ruling that the settlement is approved pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(1). Good cause appearing therefor, the Court hereby GRANTS Plaintiffs' Motion for Approval of Settlement of Claims and ORDERS as follows:

1. The "Aggrieved Employees" shall be defined as:

All persons who, at any time during the Settlement and Release Period were employed by Defendant in non-exempt hourly positions in the State of California who were provided with at least one wage statement.

2. "Defendant" means CitiStaff Solutions, Inc.

3. The "Settlement and Release Period" means from May 10, 2015 to September 12, 2016.

4. The Court hereby approves the Settlement as set forth in the Settlement Agreement as fair, reasonable, and adequate, and directs the parties to effectuate the Settlement according to the terms of the Settlement Agreement.

5. The Court orders that Defendant shall pay the Gross Settlement Amount of \$275,000.00 to the Settlement Administrator on the following schedule, as provided for in the Settlement Agreement: Payment 1: \$15,000.00, to be paid within five (5) business days from an Order from the Court approving this Settlement or June 1, 2018, whichever is later, representing Representative Plaintiffs' Enhancement Payments; Payment 2: \$12,146.04 to be paid on July 1, 2018 representing Aggrieved Employees' Counsel Costs; Payment 3: \$30,555.55 to be paid on August 1, 2018, representing the first 1/3 of the Aggrieved Employees' Counsel Fees; Payment 4: \$30,555.55 to be paid on October 1, 2018, representing the second 1/3 of the Aggrieved

¹ All terms used in this Order shall have the same meaning as that assigned to them in the Settlement Agreement.

1 Employees' Counsel Fees; Payment 5: \$30,555.55 to be paid on December 1, 2018,
2 representing the third 1/3 of the Aggrieved Employees' Counsel Fees; Payment 6: \$15,630.78
3 to be paid on January 1, 2019 representing the amounts distributable to the LWDA, Aggrieved
4 Employees and Settlement Administration Costs; Payments 7 through 18: \$12,777.78 to be
5 paid monthly, commencing on February 1, 2019 through December 1, 2019, to be paid on the
6 first date of each month, representing the amounts distributable to the LWDA, Aggrieved
7 Employees and Settlement Administration Costs.² See Settlement, § III.H.2.

8 6. The Court hereby approves, as to form and content, the Notice of Settlement submitted
9 by the parties.

10 7. The Court hereby appoints CPT Group, Inc. as Settlement Administrator.

11 8. Within fifteen (15) business days of settlement approval, CitiStaff will provide CPT
12 with a list containing the Aggrieved Employees' names, last known addresses, last known
13 telephone numbers, and social security numbers.

14 9. CPT Group, Inc. is directed to mail the individual settlement payments and Notice of
15 Settlement to the Aggrieved Employees within ten (10) days of receipt of the Defendant's final
16 payment of the Gross Settlement Amount.

17 10. The Court finds that attorneys' fees in the amount of \$91,666.66 for Plaintiffs' counsel,
18 and reimbursement of litigation costs of ~~\$12,147.00~~ ^{\$11,842.95} to Plaintiffs' counsel, are fair, reasonable,
19 and adequate, and orders that the Settlement Administrator distribute these payments to
20 Plaintiffs' Counsel as provided for in the Settlement Agreement.

21 11. The Court orders that the Settlement Administrator shall be paid up to \$65,000.00 for
22 all of its work done and to be done until the completion of this matter, and finds that sum
23 appropriate.

24 12. The Court finds that Representative Plaintiff Enhancement Payments of \$5,000.00 each
25 to Plaintiffs Jorge Gonzalez, Teresa Nieto, and Luis Silva for a total amount of \$15,000.00, is
26

27 ² The parties have agreed and this Court approves that to the extent that any of the payment
28 deadlines fall prior to the date that this Court issues its approval order, CitiStaff will make any
payments on the due dates with the Settlement Administrator holding the funds in escrow.

1 fair and reasonable in recognition of the unique contributions they have made and the risks they
2 undertook, on behalf of the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California, and orders that
3 the Settlement Administrator distribute this payment to Plaintiffs as provided for in the
4 Settlement Agreement.

5 13. The Court finds that the amount of \$68,389.75, representing 75% of the \$91,186.34
6 allocated as PAGA penalties in this action, to be paid to the California Labor and Workforce
7 Development Agency ("LWDA") as provided for by the Settlement, is fair, adequate, and
8 reasonable, and orders that payment be made to the LWDA in accordance with the terms of the
9 Settlement Agreement.

10 14. The court approves the limited scope of the release. Following entry of this Order and
11 Final Judgment, Representative Plaintiffs and Aggrieved Employees will have released all
12 Released Claims against Released Persons, meaning that PAGA civil penalties recoverable
13 under any theory of liability upon which such civil penalties under the PAGA could have been
14 recovered based upon the allegations in the operative Complaint, including specifically any and
15 all claims, causes of action, damages, wages, benefits, expenses, penalties, interest, debts,
16 liabilities, demands, obligations, attorneys' fees, costs, and any other form of relief or remedy
17 in law, equity, or whatever kind or nature that were asserted or could have been asserted
18 pursuant to Labor Code §§ 558 or 2698 et seq. for violation of Labor Code Section 226.

19 15. Upon entry of this Final Order and Judgment, the Court permanently enjoins and
20 forever bars the Representative Plaintiffs, Aggrieved Employees' Counsel, or the Aggrieved
21 Employees from instituting or prosecuting any action against the Released Persons which was
22 resolved as part of the Settlement. Without affecting the finality of this Final Order and
23 Judgment in any way, the Court retains jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the Settlement.
24 Plaintiffs shall file a declaration confirming the final distribution of funds on or before

25 JANUARY 21 ²⁰²⁰₂₀₁₉.

26 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

27 Dated: 11-19-2018

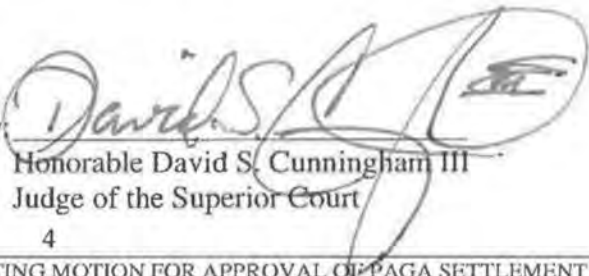
28 By: 
Honorable David S. Cunningham III
Judge of the Superior Court

EXHIBIT 4

Electronically Received 09/24/2020 01:42 PM

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Attorneys for Plaintiff
and Aggrieved Employees

FILED
Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles

09/30/2020

Shirley R. Carter, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court

By: H. Garcia Deputy

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**

JOSE M. IBARRA, on behalf of himself, other
aggrieved employees, and the State of
California,

Plaintiff,

vs.

BAKER COMMODITIES, INC., a Delaware
corporation; and DOES 1 through 100,

Defendants.

Case No. 19STCV06148

*[Assigned for all purposes to Hon. Yolanda
Orozco, Dept. 31]*

**~~AMENDED~~ [PROPOSED] JUDGMENT
RE: SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS
BROUGHT UNDER THE PRIVATE
ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT**

Date: September 23, 2020
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Dept.: 31

Complaint Filed: February 22, 2019

1 This matter came on regularly for hearing before this Court on September 23, 2020 at 2:00
2 p.m. Having considered the parties' Joint Stipulation for Settlement ("Settlement");¹ the
3 documents and evidence presented in support thereof; and recognizing the disputed factual and
4 legal issues involved in this case; the risks of further prosecution, the substantial benefits to be
5 received by the State of California and the Aggrieved Employees pursuant to the Settlement; and
6 the fair, reasonable, and adequate nature of the settlement obtained as a result of good faith arm's-
7 length negotiations between the parties, the Court granted Plaintiff Jose Ibarra's ("Plaintiff")
8 Motion for Approval of Settlement under the Private Attorneys General Act ("Motion"), and
9 approved the Settlement pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(l), on September 23, 2020. Having
10 previously granted the Motion, and good cause appearing therefor, the Court hereby enters
11 JUDGMENT as follows:

- 12 1. The "Aggrieved Employees" shall be defined as:
13 All current and former non-exempt employees who worked at least one
14 pay period for Baker Commodities, Inc. in California at any time during
the PAGA Period.
- 15 2. The "PAGA Period" means December 18, 2017 through July 1, 2020.
- 16 3. The settlement as set forth in the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and
17 the parties shall effectuate the Settlement according to its terms.
- 18 4. Defendant Baker Commodities, Inc. ("Baker") shall pay the Gross Settlement
19 Amount of \$450,000.00² to the Settlement Administrator on the following schedule, as provided
20 for in the Settlement Agreement: Baker shall deposit the Gross Settlement Amount in two
21 installments: 1) The first installment of 50% of the Gross Settlement Amount shall be deposited
22 by Baker with the Settlement Administrator within thirty (30) days of September 23, 2020; and
23 2) The second installment of 50% of the Gross Settlement Amount shall be deposited by Baker
24 with the Settlement Administrator within one hundred twenty (120) days of September 23, 2020.

25 ¹ All terms used in this Judgment shall have the same meaning as that assigned to them in the
26 Settlement Agreement, attached as Exhibit 1 to the Declaration of Paul K. Haines submitted
concurrently with the Motion for PAGA Settlement Approval, filed on June 12, 2020.

27 ² Pursuant to the Settlement, the \$450,000.00 Gross Settlement Amount is subject to an
28 "Escalator Clause" should the number of pay periods worked by Aggrieved Employees during
the PAGA Period exceed 32,250. Should the Escalator Clause be triggered, Baker shall increase
the Gross Settlement Amount accordingly, pursuant to the Settlement.

1 5. The Explanatory Letter submitted by the parties and included as Exhibit A to the
2 Settlement is approved as to form and content.

3 6. Phoenix Settlement Administrators is appointed as the Settlement Administrator.

4 7. Within ten (10) business days of September 23, 2020, Baker shall provide the
5 Settlement Administrator with a list containing the Aggrieved Employees' names, last known
6 addresses and phone numbers, total Affected Pay Periods worked during the PAGA Period, and
7 Social Security numbers to the extent available from Baker's records, pursuant to the terms of
8 the Settlement.

9 8. The Settlement Administrator shall mail the Individual PAGA Payments and
10 Explanatory Letter to the Aggrieved Employees within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the
11 Gross Settlement Amount being fully funded, pursuant to the terms of the Settlement.

12 9. The Court finds that attorneys' fees in the amount of one-third of the Gross
13 Settlement Amount (currently estimated to be \$150,000.00)³ for Plaintiff's counsel, and
14 reimbursement of litigation costs of \$40,857.47 to Plaintiff's counsel, are fair, reasonable, and
15 adequate. The Settlement Administrator shall distribute these payments to Plaintiff's Counsel as
16 provided for in the Settlement Agreement.

17 10. The Settlement Administrator shall be paid \$2,350 from the Gross Settlement
18 Amount for all of its work done and to be done until the completion of this matter.

19 11. The Court finds that the requested Enhancement Payment of \$5,000.00 to Plaintiff
20 is fair, adequate, and reasonable in recognition of the unique contributions he has made and the
21 risks he undertook, on behalf of the Aggrieved Employees and the State of California. The
22 Settlement Administrator shall distribute this payment to Plaintiff as provided for in the
23 Settlement Agreement.

24 12. The Court finds that the amount of \$188,844.40, representing 75% of the
25 \$251,792.53⁴ allocated as PAGA civil penalties under the Settlement, to be paid to the California

26 _____
27 ³ If the Gross Settlement Amount increases due to the Escalator Clause, the amount of attorneys'
28 fees awarded to Plaintiff's counsel shall increase commensurately.

⁴ If the Gross Settlement Amount increases due to the Escalator Clause, the civil penalties paid
to LWDA and Aggrieved Employees will increase commensurately, pursuant to the Settlement.

1 Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA") as provided for by the Settlement, is
2 fair, adequate, and reasonable. This payment shall be made to the LWDA in accordance with the
3 terms of the Settlement Agreement.

4 13. The court approves the scope of the release. Following entry of this Judgment,
5 Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees will have released all of the PAGA Released Claims against
6 Baker which were resolved as part of the Settlement. The PAGA Released Claims include all
7 claims, rights, demands, liabilities and causes of action that arose during the PAGA Period for
8 civil penalties under the PAGA, based on the factual allegations pled in the operative complaint
9 in the Action, with respect to the following claims: (a) failure to pay all overtime wages; (b)
10 failure to pay all minimum wages; (c) failure to provide proper meal periods; (d) failure to
11 authorize and permit rest periods; (e) failure to furnish accurate wage statements; and (f) failure
12 to timely pay final wages, including any related claims for attorneys' fees, costs, or interest
13 resulting therefrom.

14 14. Upon entry of this Judgment, the Court permanently enjoins and forever bars the
15 Plaintiff or the Aggrieved Employees from instituting or prosecuting any of the PAGA Released
16 Claims against Baker which were resolved as part of the Settlement. Without affecting the
17 finality of this Judgment in any way, the Court retains jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the
18 Settlement pursuant to Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 664.6.

19 15. Plaintiff shall file a declaration confirming the final distribution of funds on or
20 before September 30, 2021.

21 **IT IS SO ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED.**

22
23 Dated: 09/30/2020



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yolanda Orozco", is written over the judge's name.

24 By: Yolanda Orozco / Judge
25 Honorable Yolanda Orozco
26 Judge of the Superior Court
27
28

EXHIBIT 5

Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles

Shelley Pickett, et al.,

Plaintiff,

vs.

99 Cents Only Stores, et al.

Defendants.

Case **BC473038**
No.:

Tentative Ruling

FILED
Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles
AUG 01 2017
Sherri B. Carter, Executive Officer/Clerk
By S. Temblador
Steve Temblador Deputy

Hearing Date: August 1, 2017

Department 54, Judge Ernest M. Hiroshige

Motion for Approval of Representative Action Settlement

Moving Party: Plaintiff/Cross-Defendant Shelley Pickett ("Pickett")

Responding Party: Defendant/Cross-Complainant 99 Cents Only Stores ("99 Cents Only") [non-opposition]

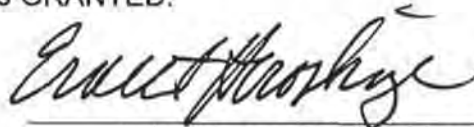
T/R: THE MOTION IS GRANTED.

PLAINTIFF TO NOTICE.

The Court considers the moving papers and Defendant/Cross-Complainant's notice of non-opposition.

Plaintiff moves for an order granting approval of the proposed settlement of claims brought pursuant to the Private Attorneys general Act of 2004 ("PAGA"), Cal. Lab Code § 2698, *et seq.* Pursuant to the proposed settlement, the parties agree to the following terms: (1) 99 Cents Only will provide all of its cashiers in its California stores with suitable seating under Section 14(B) of Wage Order 7-2001, and to create, implement, and communicate pertinent policies to its cashiers regarding this change in policy; (2) \$75,000 to be paid to the California Workforce Development Agency; (3) \$12,500 to be paid to each of the two Plaintiffs; and (4) \$1,190,000 to be paid to Plaintiffs' Counsel for attorney fees and litigation costs. 99 Cents Only filed a statement of non-opposition. Based on the moving papers, the Court finds that the settlement is reasonable and meets the requirements of PAGA. Accordingly, the motion is GRANTED.

Date: August 1, 2017


Judge Ernest M. Hiroshige

08/03/2017

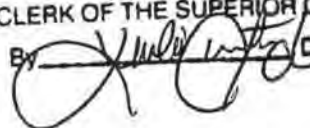
EXHIBIT 6



FILED
ALAMEDA COUNTY

AUG 02 2018

CLERK OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

By  Deputy

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA - OAKLAND - RCD COURTHOUSE

VALERIE ENOMBANG, individually and
on behalf of all other similarly situated
aggrieved employees,

Plaintiff,

v.

TARGET CORPORATION, and DOES
1-10, inclusive,

Defendants.

CASE NO. RG17853948

~~[PROPOSED]~~ ORDER GRANTING JOINT
MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF
SETTLEMENT AND JUDGMENT
THEREON; AND AWARDING
ATTORNEYS' FEES, COSTS, AND
SERVICE AWARDS

Date: July 24, 2018

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Dept: 23

Judge: Hon. Brad Seligman

The hearing on the parties' Joint Motion for Approval of Settlement came for hearing on July 24, 2018, in the Alameda County Superior Court, the Honorable Brad Seligman, presiding. The Court has reviewed the materials submitted by the parties, including the Settlement Agreement ("Settlement") and various motions and supplemental briefs.

During the hearing, the Court expressed concern about Section II(E)(2) of the Settlement, which sets forth a waiver of rights under Civil Code section 1542. The parties have agreed to strike Section II(E)(2) from the Settlement. With that revision, the Court finds the Settlement is entitled to judicial approval and meets all of the requirements for approval under the Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act, including the notice of the Settlement having been properly provided to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency

1 ("LWDA"). The Court also finds that the LWDA has not objected to, and is deemed to have
2 approved of, the terms of the Settlement. The Court further finds that, although no one other
3 than the LWDA has standing to object to the terms of the Settlement, no other objection to the
4 Settlement has been received by the Court.

5 The Court further finds that executing the seating program set forth in Section
6 II(B)(2)(a-d) of the Settlement, namely notifying each affected employee of the right to request
7 and be provided with a suitable seat or stool, and by actually providing a suitable seat or stool
8 if requested, complies with Section 14 of Wage Order 7-2001.

9 The Court additionally finds that the dismissal of the PAGA cause of action in
10 *Thompson* without prejudice as to non-Cashiers comports with the requirements of PAGA, that
11 because the PAGA cause of action in *Thompson* was brought solely as a representative action
12 under PAGA, and not as a class action, the non-Cashiers have no legally cognizable interest
13 that is impacted by the dismissal of *Thompson*, the non-Cashiers in *Thompson* have no right to
14 notice of the dismissal, and the non-Cashiers in *Thompson* have no standing to object or
15 otherwise challenge the dismissal.

16 Accordingly, the Court hereby orders, adjudges, and decrees as follows:

17 1. The Parties, their Counsel, and the Settlement Administrator shall take all steps
18 necessary to implement and consummate the Settlement according to the terms and provisions,
19 including but not limited to the parties effectuating the dismissals of *Murphy v. Target*
20 *Corporation*, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California Case No. 09-1436 and
21 *Thompson v. Target Corporation*, U.S. District Court of the Central District of California Case
22 No. 16-0839, pursuant to Section II(D)(2) of the Settlement.

23 2. The Court awards plaintiffs' counsel attorneys' fees in the amount of Three
24 Million, Six Hundred Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$3,600,000.00), plus costs in the
25 amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$200,000.00). The Court finds the
26 attorney hours, hourly rates, and costs incurred by plaintiffs' counsel over this nine-year
27 litigation as reflected in their declarations were reasonable, and further that plaintiffs' counsel
28 are entitled to a multiplier given the novelty of the claims and the contingent nature of the fee.

1 The Court further awards the representative plaintiffs, Valerie Enombang, Danyell Murpy,
2 Candi Perry, and Stacy Thompson, Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) each for the time
3 they spent, and the risk they undertook, in prosecuting these actions on behalf of the State and
4 the aggrieved employees. All of these amounts shall be deducted from the \$9 million
5 settlement fund. Attorneys' fees shall be distributed consistent with the Settlement.

6 3. Without affecting the finality of this Judgment or the Settlement, this Court
7 shall, pursuant to Section II(F)(3) of the Settlement, retain continuing jurisdiction over the
8 parties to this action to ensure effectuation of the Settlement in accordance with the terms of
9 the Settlement and this Judgment.

10 4. To the extent any settlement checks are uncashed by the deadline provided in
11 the Settlement, or in the event there any other undistributed settlement funds, such funds shall
12 be paid to the Equal Access Fund of the Judicial Branch, to be distributed in accordance with
13 Bus. & Prof. Code sections 6216 to 6223.

14 5. Judgment and dismissal is hereby entered as to Plaintiff Valerie Enombang, the
15 LWDA, and all individuals who worked for Defendant in California as a Cashier as that term
16 is defined in the Settlement Agreement at any time from April 14, 2008 through the date of
17 this Order.

18 6. Except as otherwise provided by the Settlement, each side shall bear their own
19 attorneys' fees and costs.

20 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

21
22
23 DATED: 8/2/10

HON. BRAD SELIGMAN
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

Case Number: RG17853948

Case name: Enombang v. Target Corporation

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I am not a party to this cause and that a true and correct copy of this Order was emailed to the addresses shown on at the bottom of this document.

Dated: August 03, 2018

Jhalisa A. Castaneda

Courtroom Clerk, Dept. 23

James Clapp <jclapp@clapplegal.com>; Marita Lauinger <mlauinger@clapplegal.com>;
Wilson Claudette G. <CWilson@wilsonturnerkosmo.com>; allen@gravesfirm.com;
'jeffwohl@paulhastings.com'; Kevin McInerney kevin@mcinerneylaw.net

EXHIBIT 7

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA,
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
GORDON D SCHABER COURTHOUSE**

MINUTE ORDER

DATE: 07/24/2018

TIME: 02:00:00 PM

DEPT: 53

JUDICIAL OFFICER PRESIDING: David Brown

CLERK: E. Brown

REPORTER/ERM: T. Huffman CSR# 13789

BAILIFF/COURT ATTENDANT: M. Oreschak, M. Meraz

CASE NO: **34-2017-00220347-CU-OE-GDS** CASE INIT.DATE: 10/10/2017

CASE TITLE: **Grace vs. Flowmaster Inc**

CASE CATEGORY: Civil - Unlimited

EVENT TYPE: Motion - Other - Civil Law and Motion

APPEARANCES

Theresa Mak, counsel, present for Defendant(s).

Jill Vecchi, counsel present for plaintiff, telephonically

Nature of Proceeding: Motion for Approval of Settlement

TENTATIVE RULING

Plaintiff Carrie Grace's unopposed motion for approval of settlement of claims brought pursuant to the Private Attorney General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") is granted.

Plaintiff seeks an order approving settlement of claims brought in this action on behalf of herself and all persons employed by Defendant Flowmaster, Inc. in non-exempt positions in its warehouses between August 7, 2016 and July 27, 2018 or the date the Court approves the settlement, whichever is earlier. The PAGA claims were premised on six alleged violations of Labor Code (e.g., failure to pay wages, failure to provide meal and rest breaks, failure to provide itemized wage statements). Approximately 323 employees suffered the alleged Labor Code violations during the relevant period. Plaintiff calculated Flowmaster's maximum potential exposure at approximately \$3,459,000 based on multiplying 5,765 pay periods by 6 PAGA violations by \$100. Flowmaster contends its exposure is limited to \$576,500. Flowmaster asserted numerous defenses including that the case could not be managed. The parties reached a settlement for \$750,000. The settlement includes attorneys' fees of \$247,500 (33% of the settlement), \$15,588.67 in costs, a \$10,000 service payment to Plaintiff, and up to \$5,000 in claims administration costs. The net settlement amount is \$471,911.33. 75% of that amount (\$353,933.50) will be distributed to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency [LWDA] and 25% (\$117,977.83) to the aggrieved employees based on the number of pay periods worked during the relevant time period.

Settlement of PAGA claims requires Court approval. Labor Code § 2699(l)(2) provides that "[t]he superior court shall review and approve any settlement of any civil action pursuant to this part." Thus, the settlement of a PAGA claim requires court approval pursuant to the operative PAGA statute, which states that the "[t]he superior court shall review and approve any settlement of any civil action filed pursuant to this part." (See Labor Code § 2699(1)(2).) As with any settlement, the Court must be mindful in conducting its inquiry that "[s]ettlement is a compromise, which balances the possible recovery against the risks inherent in litigating further." (See *In re TD Ameritrade Account Holder Litig.*, 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 103222, 24 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 12, 2011).) Indeed, "the very essence of a

settlement is ... 'a yielding of absolutes and an abandoning of highest hopes'" [*Officers for Justice v. Civil Service Com.*, 688 F.2d 615, 624 (9th Cir., 1982)], as "it is the very uncertainty of outcome in litigation and avoidance of wasteful and expensive litigation that induce consensual settlements." (See *Id.*, at 625.) As such, "the settlement or fairness hearing is not to be turned into a trial or rehearsal for trial on the merits" or "judged against a hypothetical or speculative measure of what might have been achieved by the negotiators." (See *Id.*)

Although the operative PAGA statute does not set forth the criteria on which a PAGA settlement is to be judged, it is presumed that a reviewing court may utilize some of the factors for review of a class action settlement under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23 ("Rule 23"), CCP. § 382 and Rule 3.769, Cal. Rules of Court, as courts within California have approved settlements of PAGA claims encompassed within class action settlements using Rule 23 criteria. However, it is important to underscore that not all Rule 23 factors can be applied, as "a PAGA claim asserted on a non-class representative basis . . . is not considered a class action but a law enforcement action, and therefore does not have to meet the requirements of Rule 23." (See *Casida v. Sears Holdings Corp.*, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 9302, 8 (E.D. Cal. Jan. 25, 2012); *Thomas v. Aetna Health of Cal. Inc.* 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 59377 (E.D. Cal. June 2, 2011); *Mendez v. Tween Brands, Inc.*, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 66454 (E.D. Cal. June 30, 2010). Based thereon, a court's review of a PAGA settlement necessarily implicates the following unique features that render the approval process completely distinct from approval of a class action settlement under Rule 23 or CCP. § 382 and 15 Rule 3.769, Cal. Rules of Court.

First, in evaluating the adequacy of the settlement amount, the Court's focus is not concerned with the amount which "aggrieved employees" are to receive, but rather, must focus on the total settlement amount in achieving PAGA's objective. Indeed, "[t]he remedy sought in a PAGA suit consists of civil penalties, not individual or class damages" [*Mendez v. Tween Brands, Inc.*, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 66454, 11 (E.D. Cal. June 30, 2010)], and "[u]nlike class actions, these civil penalties are not meant to compensate unnamed employees because the action is fundamentally a law enforcement action." (See *Ochoa-Hernandez v. CJADERS Foods, Inc.*, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 32774, 12 (N.D. Cal. Apr. 2, 2010). Second, consistent with the fact that unnamed employees have no properly interest in a PAGA claim, "[u]nnamed employees need not be given notice of the PAGA claim, nor do they have the ability to opt-out of the representative PAGA claim." (See *Ochoa-Hernandez*, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 32774, at 13.) Finally, unlike a class action settlement under Rule 23(e) or CCP. § 382, the scope of release permitted in a PAGA settlement is limited. While "judgment in [a PAGA] action is binding not only on the named employee plaintiff but also on government agencies and any aggrieved employee not a party to the proceeding" [*Arias v. Superior Court* (2009) 46 Cal. 4th 969, 986], "the nonparty employees, because they were not given notice of the action or afforded any opportunity to be heard, would not be bound by the judgment as to remedies other than civil penalties." (See *Id.*, at 987.) Thus, the scope of a release in a PAGA settlement is necessarily strictly confined to the civil penalties alleged in the first amended complaint.

In deciding whether to grant approval of the proposed Settlement, the primary issue to be decided is whether the Settlement is fair, adequate and reasonable. As set forth herein, the proposed Settlement embodies all of the features of a settlement that is fair, reasonable, and adequate, as it is the product of (1) arms-length negotiations, (2) negotiated by attorneys experienced in wage and hour issues, (3) subsequent to undertaking sufficient investigation necessary to evaluate the relative strength and value of the PAGA claim, and (4) it reflects a reasoned compromise based directly on the relative strength and value of the PAGA claim, as well as the risks, expense, complexity and likely duration of further litigation. The settlement was the product of arms-length negotiations reached at mediation and was negotiated by counsel with significant experience in wage and hour litigation and occurred after counsel conducted significant investigation to evaluate the strength and potential value of the PAGA claims and risks of litigating through trial. (Turley Decl. ¶¶ 2-29) In addition, the settlement achieves a significant benefit given it results in a recovery of \$750,000 for the PAGA penalties. Further, the scope of the release is

narrowly tailored and is only limited to the civil penalties asserted in the action under PAGA, in conformity with *Arias, supra*, 46 Cal.4th at 987. In addition, Plaintiff submitted the proposed settlement to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency at the same time it was presented to the Court as required by Labor Code § 2699(l)(2). (Id. ¶ 18.) As a result, the Court finds that the instant settlement is fair, adequate and reasonable and it is approved.

In addition, the Court approves Plaintiff's Counsel's request for fees and costs. Counsel is entitled to recover attorneys' fees and costs under the "common fund" doctrine as a matter of right. As held by the U.S. Supreme Court, "a lawyer who recovers a common fund for the benefit of persons other than himself or his client is entitled to a reasonable attorney's fee from the fund as a whole." (See *Boeing Co. v. Van Gemert* (1980) 444 U.S. 472, 478.) In *Glendale City Employees' Association v. City of Glendale* (1975) 15 Cal.3d 328, 341 fn. 19, the California Supreme Court upheld an attorneys' fee award based on a percentage of the common benefit obtained in a lawsuit by a city employees' association for retroactive wages. "When assessing whether the percentage requested is reasonable, courts look to factors such as: (a) the results achieved; (b) the risk of litigation; (c) the skill required, (d) the quality of work; (e) the contingent nature of the fee and the financial burden; and (f) the awards made in similar cases." (See *Vasquez v. Coast Valley Roofing, Inc.*, 266 F.R.D. 482, 492 (E.D. Cal. 2010).) Plaintiff's Counsel's request for attorneys' fees in the amount of \$247,500 (33%) from the \$750,000 PAGA Settlement Sum falls well within the "zone of reasonableness." It is important to highlight at the outset that the fee amount presently sought is not extraordinary, but actually falls at the "average" fee deemed reasonable under California State court authority, as it is recognized that "courts may award attorney's fees in the 30-40% range in wage and hour class actions that result in recovery of a common fund under \$10 million." (See, e.g. *Martin v. AmeriPride Servs.*, 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 61796, 23 (S.D. Cal. June 9, 2011). Moreover, taking into account the contingency risk Plaintiff's Counsel agreed to incur for the benefit of the State of California (which elected not to take the case after receiving the PAGA Notice), and the significant results achieved - facts which justify the requested fee - Plaintiff's Counsel's requested fee is reasonable under all applicable standards. In addition the \$15,588.67 in litigation costs are reasonable.

Further, the \$10,000 service payment to Plaintiff is appropriate. Case authority supports the award of incentive payments in private attorney general actions. A named plaintiff's "willingness to act as a private attorney general" can justify an award of an incentive payment. (*Rodriguez v. West Publishing Corp.* (9th Cir. 2009) 563 F.3d 948, 959.)

In addition, the \$5,000 in administration costs for Simpluris, Inc. to administer the settlement is reasonable.

The Court will sign the proposed order.

COURT RULING

The tentative ruling was affirmed as modified on the record.